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Collective Memory and Mass Violence

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Collective Memory and Mass Violence

HIST / HGS 276/376

Fall 2017

Instructor: Thomas Kühne

Time: Wednesday, 9:00-11:50 am

Place: Rose Library & Kent Seminar Room, Strassler Center

Office Hours: Tues 12:30-1 pm, 2:30-3 pm & by appointment, Strassler Center, 2nd floor

Email: tkuehne@clarku.edu

Description

There is no present and no future without the past. This is true not least when it comes to mass violence: the way societies decide about whether to engage in war or even genocide depends on their collective experiences with mass violence in the past, and on which lessons they have drawn from these experiences. Having suffered from complete devastation during World War II, most European societies have decisively refrained from warfare since 1945 and observed pacifist attitudes. The United States, widely untroubled by major wars on its own territory since the late 19th century, has been less reluctant to resolve political conflicts violently.

This seminar examines how societies, nations, groups and individuals remember war, genocide, and terror. How is such memory fabricated, transmitted, and consumed? We will inquire into theories of, and approaches to, the concept of collective memory and apply them to major events of mass violence and political terror in the 20th century: World War I, the Armenian Genocide, World War II, the Holocaust, the 1948 Palestine War, Apartheid in South Africa, the Vietnam War (and the American War as it is called in Vietnam), colonialism and genocide of indigenous peoples in North America, and the genocide in Rwanda. The difference between war and genocide will deserve attention. Comparative explorations into various regions will structure the course throughout.

The course will explore a broad range of issues and mediums of collective memory: legal issues of justice and injustice as they materialize in national and international trials and in international conventions; emotional consequences of trauma, mourning, shame, and guilt; the negotiation of memory in memoirs and testimonies, mass media, memorials, monuments, museums, fictional literature and popular culture (e.g., cinema and TV); the agency of survivors of genocides, war veterans, and second and third generations. These different dimensions of collective memory relate to different disciplines in the humanities and in the social and behavioral sciences. The course thus offers a chance to develop insights into interdisciplinary scholarship, i.e. into the ways different disciplines approach the same topic.



Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, Germany, 2005

Requirements

This course will be taught in the spirit of a tutorial: once you decided to take the class, you are expected to stick to it, come to the sessions and be well prepared. All readings are to be completed on the day assigned, before you come to class. Please bring both the readings and your notes to class to be able to follow and participate in class discussions.

WEEKLY PAPERS: To facilitate informed discussion, you are required to write a short paper of two pages for twelve (of the fourteen) sessions, based on the assigned readings. This paper demonstrates your familiarity with the respective readings by summarizing the book (typically concisely chapter by chapter) or (*all* the assigned) the essays. It ends by articulating, and elaborating on, one or two issues related to the readings you want to discuss in class. These weekly papers are due electronically the night *before* the class meets (12:00 am, electronically to tkuehne@clarku.edu). Please have a copy of your paper ready in class; you will be asked to talk about it.

The books of Novick, Kühne, Nguyen, Minow, Barkan, and Rosenfeld listed in the following outline are available for purchase at the bookstore. All other texts are available online through Goddard (JSTOR, MUSE, etc.) or Moodle, or will be provided as photocopies. The required books (and a few more important ones) will be on reserve either or both in Goddard and Rose Libraries, where you can read but not borrow them.

Do not rely on them being available at any time at the libraries. It is your responsibility to have these and all other required readings ready and read before class.

FINAL PAPER: Undergraduates submit a research paper of 10 pages text, including title and bibliography, double-spaced; graduates and capstone undergraduates submit a paper of 20 pages.

Undergraduate research papers are based on (and use intensely) at least one *scholarly* book and one scholarly articles *in addition* to those mentioned in this syllabus. Graduate and capstone papers include at least four scholarly books *and* six scholarly articles; those listed below as required readings do not count. Instead of a book you can choose three articles. Newspaper articles and alike, and internet sources other than accessible through Goddard do not count as scholarly literature. (You may still use and quote them.) A one-page outline of the paper and a preliminary bibliography is due electronically (to the email of the instructor) by Nov 15. Originality, thoughtfulness, and organization of your thoughts are appreciated, as is the proper citation of your references and sources. If you are not familiar with how to write and submit such a paper, you may wish to consult J. R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History* (10th ed., Boston, 2007) or Ch. Lipson, *How to Write a BA Thesis* (Chicago, 2005). They offer valuable assistance, not least regarding the formal shape of your paper.



Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C., USA

Plagiarism is a capital crime in academia; be aware of Clark's policy on academic integrity, <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/integrity.cfm>: "Plagiarism refers to the presentation of someone else's work as one's own, without proper citation of references and sources, whether or not the work has been previously published. Submitting work obtained from a professional term paper writer or company is plagiarism. Claims of ignorance about the rules of attribution, or of unintentional error are not a defense against a finding of plagiarism."

If you face problems identifying or accessing research literature or other sources, get in touch (not only in the eleventh hour!) with me or with and/or the *Research and Instruction Services* of Goddard Library. You may schedule an appointment with them by using this link: [Research Help Appointment with Tony](#). Anthony Penny, the Research & Instruction Librarian at Goddard Library, is extremely competent and cooperative.

Please submit the final paper and the previous outline electronically to tkuehne@clarku.edu no later than at the last day of classes, Dec 11; electronic submissions are accepted when confirmed by the instructor within 24 hours.

FINAL EXAM: *Instead* of submitting a research paper, undergraduates may choose to take an exam in the exam period at the end of the term. (Graduate students and capstone undergraduates must submit a research paper.) This exam will give you a choice of 15 major concepts discussed before in class and relevant for your knowledge on collective memory, e.g. "trauma," "denial," or "truth commission." Out of these 15 concepts you must choose ten and define and elaborate on them.

Grading and Practical Arrangements

A maximum of 100 points can be achieved with

- 60 points for 12 weekly papers (5 points each)
- 10 points for continuous participation in class discussion
- 30 points for the research paper OR the in-class exam

100-95 points=A, 94-90 points=A-, 89-85 points=B+, 84-80=B, 79-75 points=B-etc.

Apart from inquiring in the relation of collective memory and mass violence, this course serves to introduce students more generally to techniques of historical scholarship and practices of academic communication. It is of great importance to develop and strengthen skills of analyzing primary and secondary sources critically. The required readings are carefully chosen. However, none of them should be mistaken as comprising a final truth. Consider them as one of many options to look at a certain topic. Try to understand the basic assumptions, the main arguments, and the limitations of any text you read. Critique is the oil of knowledge. In class, you are invited to speak up and to articulate your thoughts and ideas, whether or not they comply with those of your classmates or those of the instructor.

Checking emails on a regular basis and staying connected with friends and the rest of the world is very important. Don't do it in class though. Laptops, cell phones, iPods, Gameboys, DVD players and other electronic devices are inclined to distract you or others from class discussions. They are to be switched off during class. Taking notes during class is highly recommended but do it by hand rather than electronically.

This course will require "ENGAGED ACADEMIC TIME" of 180 hours:

42 hours = In-class activities (14 x 3 hours)

96 hours = assigned readings (12 x 8 hours)

12 hours = weekly papers (12 x 1 hour)

30 hours = final paper or preparation of final exam.

You are supposed to attend class on a regularly basis. Absences without sufficient documentation will result in a deduction of five points each. Absences due to religious beliefs, especially on major holidays, will be excused with no penalty, but please notify the instructor in advance, not least to discuss the submission of your weekly paper. Please note that per university policies students who abuse the excused absence policy by consciously misrepresenting to the instructor the reason for the absence will be considered to have committed academic misconduct. Examples of abuse include falsifying an illness or family emergency, falsely claiming that attendance at the event is required, falsely claiming to have attended an event, or falsely claiming that an absence has been approved by university officials.

Clark University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you have or think you have a disability and require academic accommodations, you must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). If you have questions about the process, please contact Accessibility Services, accessibilityservices@clarku.edu, or [\(508\)798-4368](tel:5087984368). If you are registered with SAS, and qualify for accommodations that you would like to utilize in this course, please request those accommodations through SAS in a timely manner.

Faculty Members are "Responsible Employees": This notice is to inform you that the Faculty member(s) and Teaching Assistant(s) associated with this course are considered "Responsible Employees" by Clark University. As such, they are required to report all alleged sexual offenses to the University's Title IX Coordinator, Lynn Levey, llevy@clarku.edu. The only exceptions to this reporting responsibility are the community members who have been designated and/or trained as "Confidential" Sources. This includes the professional staff in Clark's Center for Counseling and Personal Growth and the medical providers at the Health Center, as well as other individuals listed at <http://bit.ly/2eUOGGx>

Course Outline

Week 1, Aug 30:

Introduction

Presentation of content and practical arrangements of class. Opening discussion on current memory politics: "Confederate Memorials—Destruction, Preservation, or Alteration?"

Week 2, Sept 6:

Trauma: The Holocaust Survivors

Reading: selections from Lawrence L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies. The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven, 1991); Cathy Caruth, "Trauma and Experience: Introduction," in Cathy Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, 1995), pp. 3-12; Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York, 1992), Introduction, chapters 1 and 2.

Question Paper #1 due.

Week 3, Sept 13:

Collective Identity: The Holocaust and American Jewry

Reading: Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, 1999)

Question Paper #2 due.

SPECIAL EVENT, Sept 13, 4 pm, Rose Library:

Wolf Gruner (USC, Shoah Foundation), Research with Genocide Survivor Testimonies of the USC Visual History Archive

Professor Gruner will introduce the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive and its more than 55,000 video testimonies of survivors and eyewitnesses of the Holocaust, the Rwandan, Armenian, Cambodian, and Guatemalan genocides, and the Nanjing Massacre in China. He will describe how testimonies can enrich research and change perspectives about genocide.

Week 4, Sept 20:

Brotherhood of War: Guilt, Shame and Honor in Germany

Reading: Thomas Kühne, *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship: Hitler's Soldiers, Male Bonding and Mass Violence in the 20th Century* (Cambridge, 2017) [Focus on the Introduction, Parts I and III, and the Conclusion; skim Part II.]

Question Paper #3 due.

Selections from the movie *The Deer Hunter* (1978) to be watched in class in preparation of week 5.

Week 5, Sept 27:

Restoring Masculinity: America and the Vietnam War

Reading: Robert Jay Lifton, *Home from the War: Vietnam Veterans—Neither Victims nor Executioners* (New York, 1973), Introduction and chapter 3; Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America. Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington, 1989), pp. xi-xv, 168-186; Robin Wagner Pacifici and Barry Schwartz, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past," *American Journal of Sociology* 97 (1991), 376-420 (Goddard online); Kim S. Theriault, "Go Away Little Girl: Gender, Race, and Controversy in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Prospects* 29 (2005), 595-617.

Question Paper #4 due.

Week 6, Oct 4:

A Kaleidoscope of Memories: the American War in Vietnam and Beyond

Reading: Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies. Vietnam and the Memory of War* (Cambridge, Mass., 2016).

Question Paper #5 due.

Week 7, Oct 11:

Women and Femininity in Holocaust Memory

Reading: Lawrence L. Langer, "Gendered Suffering? Women in Holocaust Testimonies," and Sara R. Horowitz, "Women in Holocaust Literature: Engendering Trauma Memory," both in Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman, eds., *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven, 1998), 351-378; Barbie Zelizer, "Gender and Atrocity: Women in Holocaust Photographs," in: idem, ed., *Visual Culture and the Holocaust* (New Brunswick, 2000), 247-271; selections from Anna Reading, *The Social Inheritance of the Holocaust. Gender, Culture and Memory* (New York, 2002).

Question Paper #6 due.

Selections from the movie *The Reader* (2008) to be watched and discussed in class.

Week 8, Oct 18:

Retribution or Reconciliation? Justice After Injustice

Reading: Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness. Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence* (Boston, 1998).

Question Paper #7 due.

Documentary movie *The Specialist* (1999) on the 1961 Jerusalem Eichmann trial to be watched and discussed in class.



Adolf Eichmann on trial in Jerusalem, 1961

SPECIAL EVENT, Oct 19, 7 pm, Dana Commons:

Lina Sergie Attar (Karam Foundation), *Stories from Syria's Children: Growing up in the Age of Genocide and Displacement.*

What does “home” mean to a child growing up as a refugee? What kind of future do we envision for people fleeing war? In this personal talk about the Syrian humanitarian crisis and its devastating toll on children, Attar describes living through unimaginable loss when conflict hits home and explores innovative and meaningful ways to nurture hope in a time of despair.

Week 9, Oct 25:

Restitution and the Quest for International Morality

Reading: Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations. Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustice* (New York, 2000). [You may skim chapters 2 to 6, but read the introduction and the rest of the book thoroughly.]

Question Paper #8 due.

Week 10, Nov 1:

Denial: Turkey and the Armenian Genocide

Reading: Stanley Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering* (London, 2001), excerpts; Taner Akçam, "Turkey and the Armenian Ghost," *Armenian Weekly*, December 15, 2012, <http://armenianweekly.com/2012/12/15/akcam-turkey-and-the-armenian-ghost/>; Fatma Müge Göçek, *Denial of Violence. Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians, 1789-2009* (New York, 2015), excerpts from the Introduction, pp. 1-67; Uğur Ümit Üngör, "Lost in commemoration: the Armenian genocide in memory and identity," *Patterns of Prejudice* 48:2 (2014), pp. 147-166 (Goddard online); Roger Smith, "Genocide Denial and Prevention," *Genocide Studies International* 8:1 (2014), pp. 102-109.

Question Paper #9 due.

Week 11, Nov 8:

Memory Wars: Israel and Palestine

Reading: Avraham Burg, *The Holocaust is Over, We must Rise From its Ashes* (New York, 2009), selections; Cristina Andriani, "Echoes of the Past. Some of the Underlying Nuances of Holocaust Trauma in Israel," *The Armenian Weekly*, April 2010, pp. 34-38, <http://armenianweekly.com/2010/06/03/echoes-of-the-past/>; Boaz Cohen, "Israel," in Peter Hayes and John K. Roth, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (Oxford, 2010), chapter 37 (Goddard online); Meir Litvak, *Palestinian Collective Memory and National Identity* (Basingstoke, 2009), Introduction; Dan Bar-on, *Tell Your Life Story. Creating Dialogue between Jews and Germans, Israelis and Palestinians* (Budapest, 2006), chapter 3.

Question Paper #10 due.

Selections from the movie *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) to be watched in class in preparation of week 13.

SPECIAL EVENT: Nov 9, 4 pm, Rose Library:

Alex Hinton (Rutgers University), Man or Monster? The Trial of a Khmer Rouge Torturer

During the Khmer Rouge's brutal reign in Cambodia during the mid-to-late 1970s, a former math teacher named Duch served as the commandant of the S-21 security center, where as many as 20,000 victims were interrogated, tortured, and executed. In 2009 Duch stood trial at the UN-backed Khmer Rouge Tribunal for these crimes against humanity. While the prosecution painted Duch as evil, his defense lawyers claimed he simply followed orders. This was just one of several parallels between the Duch trial at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal and the Eichmann trial. This talk will discuss Duch's trial and how it might help us reconsider Arendt's notion of the banality of evil in terms of "the banality of everyday thought."



Youths at Auschwitz Memorial Museum, Poland

Week 12, Nov 15:

Dark Tourism: Travelling to Death and Disaster

Reading: Malcolm Foley and John Lennon, *Dark Tourism. The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (London, 2000), selections; Richard Sharpley, "Shedding Light on Dark Tourism," in Philip Stone and Richard Sharpley, *The Darker Side of Travel. The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism* (Bristol, 2009), pp. 3-22; Sarah Hodgkinson, "The Concentration Camp as a Site of 'Dark Tourism,'" *Témoigner. Entre histoire et mémoire*, 116 (2013), pp. 22-32; Thomas P. Thurnell-Read, "Engaging Auschwitz: An Analysis of Young Travellers' Experiences of Holocaust Tourism," *Journal of Tourism Consumption and Practice* 1:1 (2009), pp. 26-52; Stephanie MacKinney, "Between Violence and Romance: Guerillas, Genocide, and Rwandan Tourism," in Brigitte Sion, ed., *Death Tourism. Disaster Sites as Recreational Landscape* (London, 2014), pp. 289-309.

Question Paper #11 due. (Ditto outline and preliminary bibliography for final paper!)

Selections of the movie *The Downfall* (2004) to be watched in class in preparation of week 13.

Week 13, Nov 29:

Normalizing Terror: Hitler and Fun Culture

Reading: Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *Hi Hitler! How the Nazi Past is Being Normalized in Contemporary Culture* (Cambridge, 2015), esp. pp. 1-28, 157-349.

Question Paper #12 due.

Week 14, Dec 6

REVIEW (IN PREPARATION OF FINAL EXAM), DISCUSSION OF FINAL PAPER OUTLINES.